sense be termed Taoists are the professionals, or *tao shift.* Some of these are anchorites who through meditation and ascetic practices seek immortality. Others are celibates living in monastic communities. The number of the latter is much smaller than that of the Buddhist monks and nuns. Like Buddhist monks, they may have entered the community either as children through purchase or the donation of parents, or as adults from weariness of the world, or from the hope of escaping the consequences of a crime, or from the desire for an assured livelihood, or from the longing for immortality and a solution to the riddle of existence. Much more numerous than the celibates are those who marry and do not live in communities but in their own homes and who support their families on fees received for saying services for the dead, writing charms, communicating with the dead through automatic writing, or exorcising evil spirits. Entrance to the ranks of the professionals seems usually to be through an apprenticeship to some accredited member.

The *tao shih* have had a sort of national organization. At its head has been one whom foreigners have usually called the "Taoist Pope," but who to the Chinese is known by titles sanctioned by former Emperors, *Tien Shih* (Heavenly Preceptor), *Chen Chun,* or *Chen Jen.* These *Tien Shih* claim descent from Chang Tao-ling, a worthy of the Han dynasty reputed to have been an outstanding expert in Taoism and a master of its alchemy and magic. To the *Tien Shih* is attributed, among other things, great power over evil spirits, and charms from him are regarded as having extraordinary efficacy in expelling them. The guardian deities of the province and prefecture are supposed to receive their appoint-

ment from him. It is said, too, that in each province the *tao shih* have a head man.

Sometimes classified with the Taoists are witches, *wu,* called among other designations *tao nai nai* and *hsien nai nai,* both showing a possible Taoist connection. They are believed to be possessed by familiar spirits, to fall into trances in which they hold communication with spirits, and to be able to cure disease by charms or other devices. It seems probable, however, that they have had an origin quite independent of and earlier than Taoism and that they ought not strictly to be thought of as belonging to it.